6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Ranching and farming are the major economic pursuits of the people of these counties. The northern and western portions contain excellent natural grazing areas and are extensively used by both residents and outsiders for grazing of beef cattle, sheep, and horses. The eastern third of Glacier county and the greater portion of Pondera are subject to lesser amounts of rainfall than the more westerly portions but have more frost free days, and have been utilized to a greater extent for both dry and irrigation farming. Principal crops are wheat, barley, and hay.

Oil and natural gas production and refining are important industries, with the principal producing fields lying just to the east of the reservation limits. Producing wells on the reservation in both the northeast and southeast corners may be tapping these same fields. Oil is also being pumped in the northwest part of the reservation and there has been revived interest recently in exploring the potential of the western foothill strip. Oil lease money and bonus payments for leasing rights have provided a fluctuating but important prop to the local economy. There has been little manufacturing or lumbering, although the foothill strip, adjoining national forests and Glacier Park, has a lumber potential that is slowly being realized as the tribal mill in Browning increases its lumber output and new wood products industries are being attracted to the reservation.

The population, with an economic base of beef, wool, grain, and hay, also supports businesses, services, schools, churches, and government. Banking and financing institutions are available in Cut Bank, Browning, Conrad and Valier. Dependent children, and also those who are needy, aged, blind, or disabled are provided for by the county public welfare system established by state law and financed by tribal, county, state, and federal funds.

Like the other people of Glacier and Pondera counties the tribal members are citizens of the United States and of the state of Montana. They participate in national and state politics and in the county, precinct, school district, and town governments according to their places of residence. Reservation boundaries, it will be seen, create an added dimension. They overlie the county system but do not obliterate, change, or directly affect it. Democrats, Republicans, independents, and disinterested voters play their respective parts at all levels of politics.

The reservation region is served by the Montana State Public Schools system. County school districts, with one or two exceptions, cross reservation lines. The public schools that have Indian pupils receive federal support under the Federal Impact Area Act (PL 874) (U.S. Statutes LXIV, 1, 1950:1100) and the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 (U.S. Statutes XLVIII, 1934:596) which in differing ways provide for payments to public schools in lieu of the taxes not received from Indian lands held in trust. Elementary schools, varying greatly in size, plant, and staff, are found in all settled and rural areas, and high schools are located at Browning, Cut Bank, Valier and Conrad.

Religious and other organizations here are similar to those found elsewhere in rural regions of the United States. Many denominations of Christian churches have followers here and each town has one or several churches. Similarly, one or several religious and secular lodges, service clubs, veterans' organizations, youth clubs, ranch, business, trade, and labor organizations are found in the communities of the area.

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Irrigation

There are three irrigation projects on the Blackfeet Reservation, Two Medicine, Badger-Fisher and Birch Creek, which provide irrigation for an area of some 40,000 acres. The Bureau of Indian Affairs at Browning, Montana, estimates that an additional 15,000 acres could be irrigated if improvements were to be made in the existing projects. The U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Missouri River Basin Investigation Project, Report No. 140 (1954), and its supplements, deal comprehensively with the Blackfeet Reservation Irrigation Projects.

Wildlife

It is estimated by "agency" personnel that most Blackfeet Indian families who live on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation have available and utilize an average of two deer per year. Relatively few fish and elk are "taken," and these contribute but little to the over-all food production or consumption of the Blackfeet Reservation.

Agricultural Credit

The availability of credit to the Blackfeet Indians for agricultural production can be placed in three categories, regular commercial, regular governmental and specifically Indian.

The First National Bank of Browning, Montana, is not the only regular commercial source of credit to the Blackfeet Indians, but it is probably the most important. During 1961, it expected to make regular commercial agriculture production loans, totaling around $1,000,000, to Blackfeet Indians for cattle operations.

Data on the Production Credit Administration loans to Blackfeet Indians operating ranches on the Blackfeet Reservation are presented in Table 21.

TABLE 21. PRODUCTION CREDIT ADMINISTRATION LOANS TO BLACKFEET INDIANS

Year	Number of loans	Total amount	Amount delinquent
1956	6	$ 64,229	None
1957	9	$111,755	None
1958	11	$121,921	None
1959	11	$137,330	None
1960	11	$129,163	None

In addition to the above, a total of $30,000 is available to the Tribal Council for its special allocation to Indian ranchers.

The Farm and Home Administration has a total of twenty-one loans with the Blackfeet Indians on the Blackfeet Reservation. Several of these are fairly sizable loans for home construction and improvement.

106 represents cash received from wages, disability and veterans' pensions,
121 income from leased land, but does not include tribal corporate
177 dividents--per capita payments which vary annually in amount but are
184 the same for all tribal members.
[434] Where a man lives with relatives, all income may be pooled, so
[592] that one man making but $800 annually may be aided by his son's income
[434] of $1,500. Several, among those with low income, receive help from more wealthy relatives. Others, classed as ranchers, may be in a family partnership and receive a part of their subsistence, and perhaps rent-free housing, as well as a share of the family cash income from the ranch or farm products. This shared housing and subsistence are not included in the income figure.[166] The average income figure, then, is less of an index of subsistence base than it is of a broad range of economic success. Those with low incomes are poor, and the aid of others does not pull them out of this condition; such aid may make subsistence possible.

[453] Has Bank Account records the cases among the sample who have
[454] checking or savings accounts or have established credit at the local bank. Because this information is limited, in most cases to transactions with the local bank, it may fail to classify accurately one or two men. The over-all picture of limited use of bank facilities, however, is realistic and may be highly diagnostic of economic and cultural differences. The percentage of the sample reporting bank accounts and

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[166] One exception, No. 46, works for board and room and draws money from his employer only to meet other requirements. The income reported for this man is an estimate of the cash equivalent of board, room, and spending money.

106 transactions is in close agreement with the tribal credit assessment
121 reported in Chapter III.

177 Use of Welfare, included as another economic index, will be
184 discussed at greater length in the analysis.

[453] Land Ownership and Land Use are included as indices of
[454] acculturation. The assumption is that the leasing of owned land to
[657] others, while lacking work oneself, is a least economical use of the
[423] land. There appears to be a tendency for the more acculturated
[427] individuals to make more use of their land. The previously mentioned complexities of land ownership and use may intervene here, and the information contained in these two columns will need further examination.

[342] Home Ownership, Lives with Relatives, Type of House, and
[592] Condition of House reflect many complex problems. But the ownership
[423] and maintenance of a home, along with single or joint family occupancy, can be used as indices of economic adjustment. As was mentioned earlier, the care and use of the home may be a more important index than is the house type.

[434] The inclusion of this information may also serve to qualify
[342] the reported income figures. A man who has reported a low income figure, but who owns a good house, probably has a better record of past earning than does the man with the low income and poor house.

[342] The ratings used are self-explanatory with the exception of those under Type of House. A dwelling consisting of one to three rooms in poor condition is classified as a shack; a similar sized residence in fair or good condition is called a cabin. A house is a dwelling of four or more rooms regardless of condition.

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

same bundle would have been considered a valuable asset in the competition for exhibition of generosity, to say nothing of its supernatural benefits, and the possessor would have been aided by the pooled resources of his large circle of kinfolk.

Yet there remain significant differences between white and Indian consumers. Of low status in terms of skills which they can contribute, their returns are less and their share proportionately smaller. Few Indians have been able to alter their lot through education, even if they normally could expect employment of their skills off the reserve. In capital assets, they are paupers, for property of value in the white economy is usually theirs only for use and not for disposal. As participants in the white world they would be living without opportunity for social advance on the bottom rung, with inadequate diet, the cheapest of clothing, and the most dismal of houses to rent.

This impoverishment not only occurred through dependence on the white economy, but dependence redefined wealth itself. Starting from a period when wealth was viewed in terms of horses transferable between all Indians, it became increasingly necessary to deal with whites. In these dealings the Indian pony quickly lost its value. Later barter took place, but gradually transactions were restricted to a currency basis. Now only the agency converts certain defined commodities into cash. With conversion rates determined by the agent and the world market, Indian labour and produce achieve value for the white economy. In some respects the rate of conversion is the same for Indian and white, yet in others, e.g. wages, seeking to accomplish the most with limited operating funds, the agency has set conversion at a lower rate than the one found off the reserve.

While the trust funds help mitigate some of the discrepancies between the two worlds, the Blackfoot are still far from possessing certain key advantages of the white citizen. On the reserve there is little freedom or encouragement of enterprise. Skills of value in the white economy are fostered to a point, but their development as an enterprise is minimal. The possibility of loans from the trust fund has not been realized, probably because individuals have not enough private property to offer as security to make the loan acceptable to Ottawa. Certainly banks and credit houses are excluded since the property of these wards is inalienable. Moreover, the emphasis given by the agency and the council of chiefs has been on collective advancement rather than on using the trust funds to